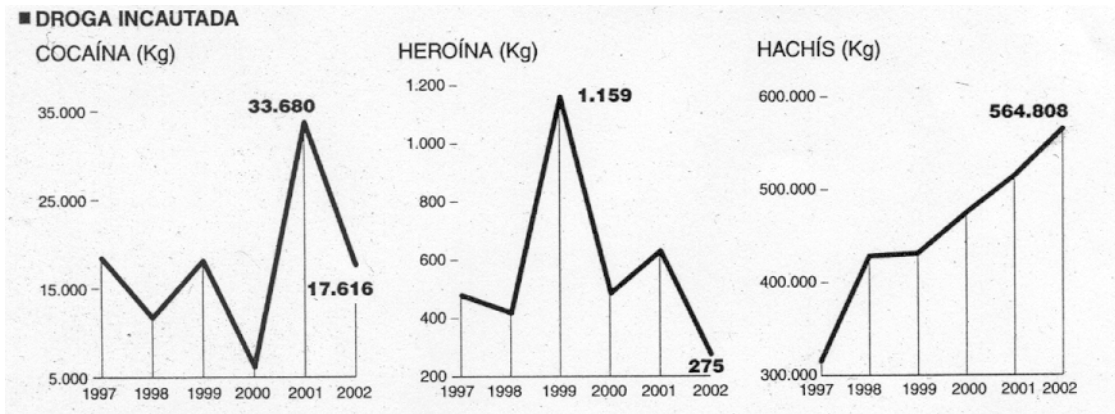


## ILLEGAL DRUG SMUGGLERS DEVISE NEW ROUTES TO THE EUROPEAN MARKET (From the Spanish journal El País)

*Spanish Police warns about new routes and alliances among drug traffickers to accede to European market.*

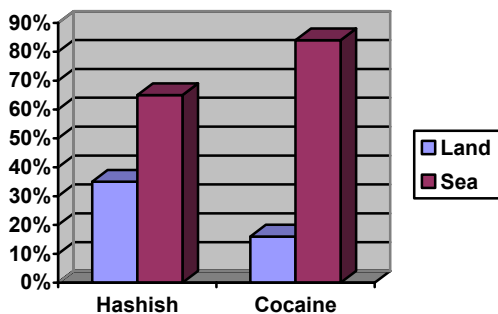
Statistics confirm the importance of Spain in illegal drug trafficking, last year Spain accounted for 50% of the cocaine seizures in the European Union, regarding Hashish, this figure goes up to 70%. Worldwide, Spain is number one in Hashish seizures (50% of the total) and third in cocaine, following the United States and Colombia; it even surpasses México in this matter.

### SEIZURES OF ILLICIT DRUGS IN SPAIN

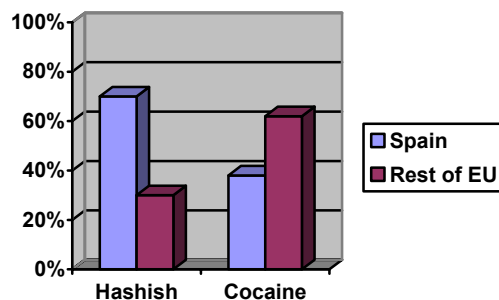


Out of the total of Spanish seizures, 84% were done in the sea, and only 16% on land. Between January 2003 and August 2004 43.000 kilos of cocaine were seized as a result of the boarding of 23 vessels, the majority of these in the area of the Canary Islands. Many of these ships were heading towards African ports in countries like Mauritania, Senegal, Gambia, Togo and Morocco.

#### Place of intervention

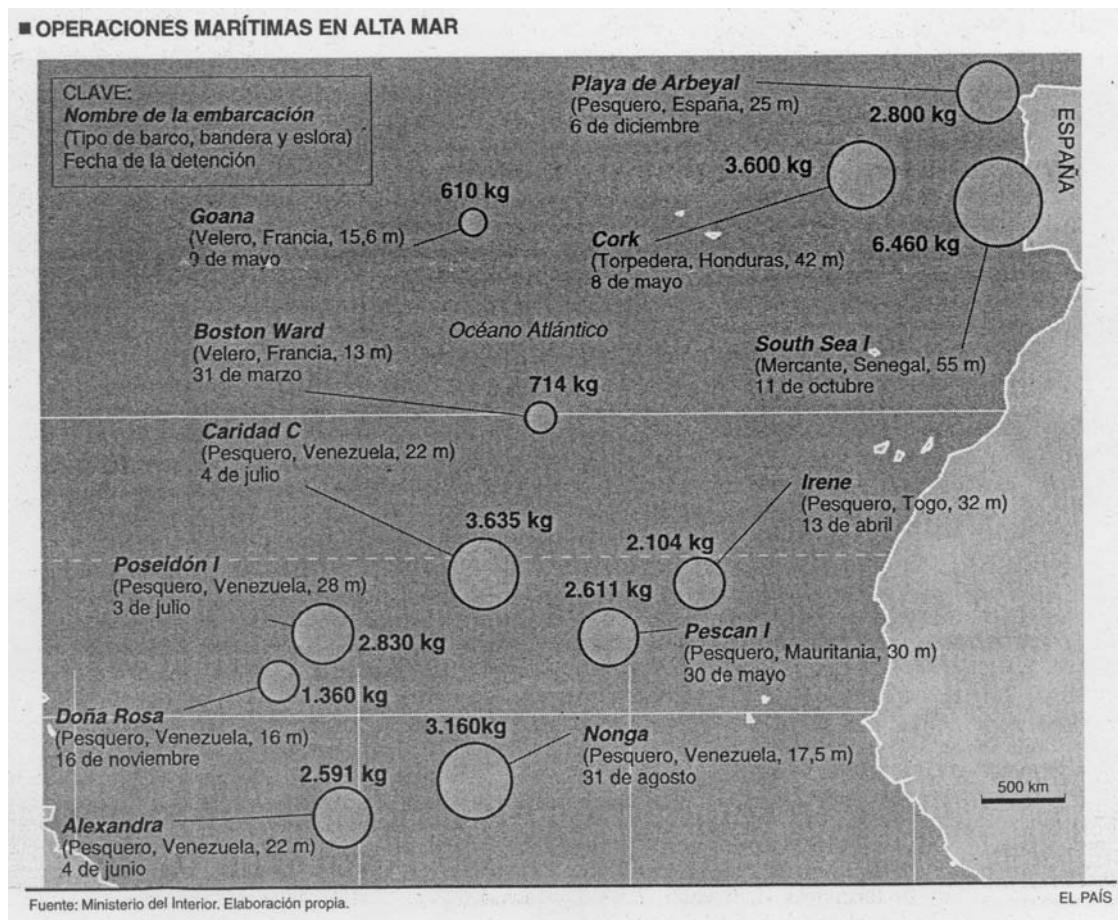


#### Seizures in the European Union



Drug Smugglers have been using sailboats to introduce cocaine into Spain, taking advantage of the lack of control in the numerous sport docks on the

Spanish coast; nevertheless the number of seizures along traditional Hashish or commercial routes is on the increase.

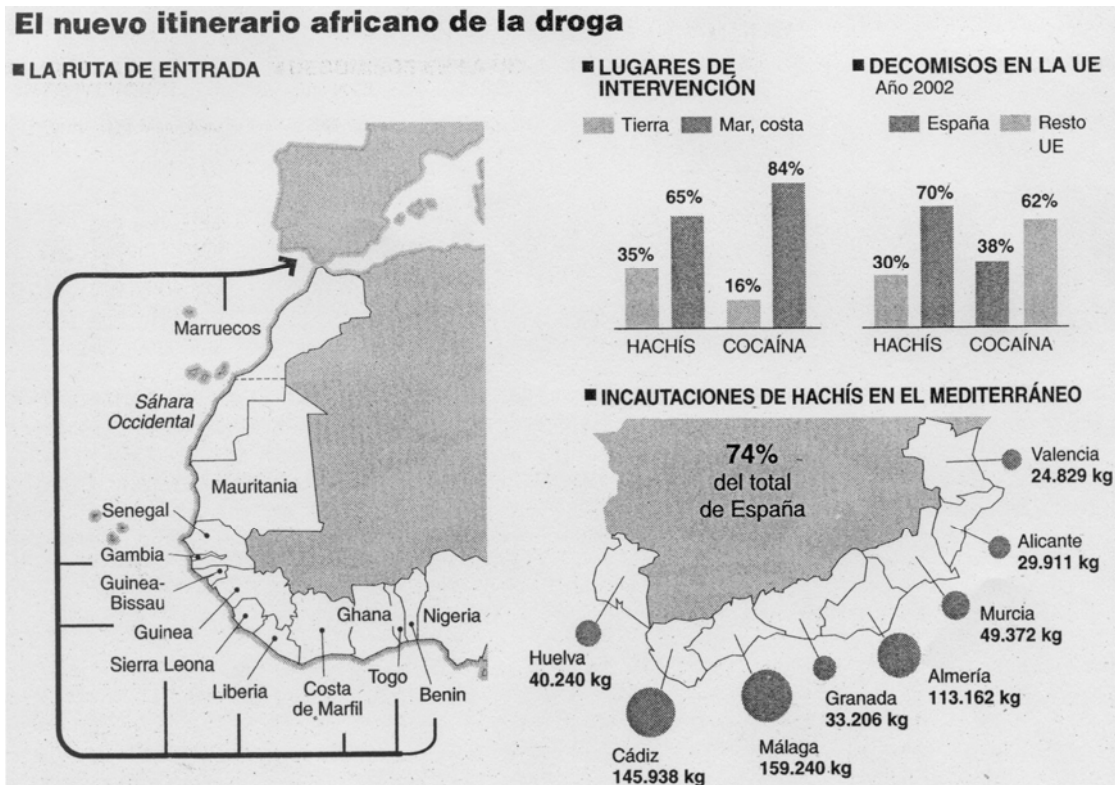


It's alarming the way in which Hashish seizures are growing, going from 440.000 kilos in 2000 to 700.000 kilos in 2003, this leads to consider an important growth in the production of this drug, of which Morocco is the world's largest producer. Hashish business is dominated nowadays by Moroccan organizations; these have been developing more complex networks with the aid of their numerous colonies throughout Europe. These organizations are very tight and hard to permeate; investigators are often encountered with difficulties due to the language and the lack of information.

Several recent findings suggest that Colombian drug smugglers have established alliances with Moroccan organizations to operate in conjunction, there have been seizures in which cocaine is found within Hashish, packed in the same manner. Recently, the Spanish police discovered a boat in the Chipiona beaches carrying 1.200 kilos of Hashish and 120 kilos of Cocaine, Spanish investigators could determine that the Colombian organization responsible had agreed with Moroccan smugglers the introduction into Spain of vast amounts of cocaine they had stored in Mauritania.

The routes of entry of Hashish into Spain have diversified due to the use of faster boats with a wider range, drug smugglers are now reaching provinces

such as Huelva, Almería, Murcia y Valencia, where seizures have multiplied, important quantities have also been seized as far as the Ebro river delta.



This new phenomenon worries authorities because this would implicate that drug smugglers would be operating from safe ports in Africa, where police are scarce and corruption is common, this added to the fact that some of these countries are susceptible to religious fundamentalism and the presence of international terrorist organizations is possible.

The new African itinerary for drug smuggling is Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Sierra Leona, Guinea, Gambia, Senegal, Western Sahara, Morocco and Spain.

Additionally, the higher value of cocaine (1 kilo of cocaine is ten times more valuable than a kilo of hashish) could be a new source of income to the Spanish criminal organizations, multiplying the already existing levels of violence and crime associated with drug trafficking.

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The executive Director of UNODC, Antonio Maria Costa in a recent visit to Bogotá, claimed that the cocaine consumption in Europe has lost momentum lately, as published in the "World Drug Report 2004".
2. This phenomenon might be directly linked to the growth in seizures of this drug.

3. Drug trafficking organizations have created new bonds, mafias that used to be separated due to language and cultural differences or fear, are now working together.
4. Authorities are being more effective, as shown by the increase in seizures; nevertheless criminal organizations are still able to find new opportunities and vulnerabilities.

**ROSSO JOSE SERRANO CADENA**

Ambassador

Permanent Representative